

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 4722
By: Howard
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current law, a public junior college, public technical institute, or public state college is required to cover remaining tuition and fees not covered under the Texas Education Opportunity Grant program (TEOG). However, unlike the state's financial aid program for public four-year universities, community colleges are not allowed to use Pell grants to cover this difference. According to information released by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in 2021, only 28 percent of the students eligible for TEOG grants received funding. This figure translates to roughly 21,320 students across community colleges in Texas. In 2022, 41 community colleges disbursed their full allotment of TEOG funds to their students and according to the most recent data available, as of February 2023, 26 colleges have disbursed 49 percent or less of their TEOG allocations within six months of receiving the grants. Enabling institutions to better leverage TEOG funds is critical to supporting community college students.

Expanding sources of financial aid authorized to cover the difference between TEOG grants and an institution's tuition and fees will free up additional resources, put TEOG on equal footing with other state financial aid programs, and, according to several chief financial aid officers at community colleges, free up administrative time and resources by streamlining financial aid resources. H.B. 4722 seeks to maximize available aid to students by including a Pell grant among sources of financial aid authorized to cover any difference between TEOG grant amounts and an institution's tuition and fees.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 4722 amends the Education Code to authorize a public junior college, public technical institute, or public state college to use a Pell grant to cover any difference in the amount of a grant under the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant program and the actual amount of tuition and required fees at the institution by removing the statutory prohibition on such an institution's use of a Pell grant for that purpose. The bill's provisions apply beginning with Texas Educational Opportunity Grants awarded for the 2024 fall semester.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.